

WHY DO WE NEED A WORLD KIDNEY DAY?

Newer information and scientific evidence have given persuasive proof that there is more kidney disease than had been thought. Developed countries worldwide treat more than 1.000.000 individuals yearly and as many as 250.000 new cases each year (1). In the United States and the Netherlands, it is estimated that 6,5% to 10% of the general population suffer from some degree of kidney disease and are therefore at increased risk of preventable cardiovascular disease and renal failure. Kidney disease is increasing rapidly in the developing world along with the prevalence of diabetes and hypertension. However, since dialysis and transplantation are both costly procedures, neither is available to the vast majority of people living outside the developed world.

The world needs a kidney day to draw global attention to the increasing global pandemic of kidney and associated cardiovascular disease. Therefore, the International Society of Nephrology (ISN) and the International Federation of Kidney Foundations (IFKF) jointly have proposed that a **World Kidney Day (WKD) be established on the second Thursday in March each year**. It was launched on Thursday, March 9, 2006, and will be fully inaugurated on Thursday, March 8, 2007. The European Renal Association/European Dialysis and Transplantation Association (ERA/EDTA) has joined this initiative promoting a concept of the European Kidney Health Alliance, as an alliance of patients, professionals and foundations to increase awareness of chronic kidney disease in Europe which is common, harmful and treatable. However, the global aim of the WKD establishment is to broadcast the message about kidney disease to government health officials, general physicians, allied health professionals, individuals and families. In addition, it is an opportunity to demonstrate that a coordinated and successful community effort on behalf of kidney patients can produce positive results so that other national kidney communities can also form similar partnerships and achieve the best results on the respective local and regional levels.

Worldwide, most of the individuals with chronic kidney disease or hypertension are not diagnosed until long after the illness has developed. Moreover, when they are diagnosed, they, too, often are treated suboptimally or not at all. In most parts of the world, once end-stage kidney failure occurs, patients do not have access to maintenance hemodialysis treatment or kidney transplantation and simply die.

For these reasons, it is time to speak up and to speak clearly, because the extent and severity of kidney disease has not been appreciated for a long time. Moreover, the availability of easy methods for early detection and the proven benefits of preventive therapy are not widely known. A day when attention to kidney disease is brought to the world's population is timely. It could also serve as a day to express appreciation for the billions of dollars of support for a disease that currently requires high-technology treatment.

However, as kidney disease is easy to detect with simple, routinely available tests (serum creatinine and urine albumin), both chronic kidney disease and the potential associated cardiovascular complications can be prevented and effectively treated with intensive blood pressure control, glucose control in diabetes patients, lipid-lowering medications, and the use of kidney-protective medication such as angiotensin-converting enzyme inhibitions or angiotensin receptor blockers.

Prevention and slowing the progression of chronic kidney diseases are the only rational public health approaches to addressing the ever-increasing number of patients with end-stage renal disease and reducing the associated cardiovascular risk in these patients (2,3).

The public health mandate is clear for governments: detection and prevention are the most cost-effective methods to address chronic kidney disease and its impact on diabetes and cardiovascular disease. Early referral to nephrologists for more complete assessment of

intervention, as well as other preventive care measures including influenza vaccinations and pneumococcal vaccinations are needed to reduce hospitalization rates for infections complications that are four times higher in patients suffering from chronic kidney disease (4). Detection efforts center on accurate measurements of serum creatinine and albumin in the urine in the estimating equation to assess the level of kidney disease. Strategies to standardize these measurements should become a global priority.

A World Kidney Day could play an important role in educating physicians and the public about prevention and treatment of kidney disease.

Full imagination of the World Kidney Day will be on March 8, 2007. It will be vital that all nephrologists from the Balkan Peninsula become involved as well as in the whole world.

Media attention, interviews with affected patients, community awareness programs and professional education efforts – they all create awareness that affects public attitudes and behaviors towards prevention and early treatment of the specific disease being profiled.

The kidney disease, with its devastating consequences when left untreated is the one that would benefit from this type of public exposure. The challenge is great, but the promise is even greater: by working together we can achieve a major reduction in the global burden of kidney and cardiovascular disease.

The BANTAO Journal – the official publication of the Balkan Cities Association of Nephrology, Dialysis, Transplantation and Artificial Organs is the main connection between the Balkan Nephrologists, between all members of our Association. We should publish our articles in the BANTAO Journal concerning our experiences in prevention and treatment of kidney disease.

The aim is to publish up to four issues of the Journal and to make the Journal recognizable on the Internet, Medline and Pub Med.

The World Kidney Day is a good event for better action of all nephrologists. The primary purpose of this day is to bring the kidney disease to the forefront as an issue for personal/family health and to provide information about the early symptoms and the simple clinical and laboratory test available for diagnosis.

We must act, and please do act immediately!

We invite you to publish in the BANTAO Journal and to fulfill the ideas of the World Kidney Day – March 8, 2007!

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